

The COUNTY

FOR THE INYO PLANNING DEPARTMENT, AN ULTIMATUM TO ACT "FAST" ON THE INYO GENERAL PLAN: INTERVIEWS PROVIDE A LOOK INTO LAST WEEK'S CLOSED MEETING OF THE ANGRY SUPERVISORS.

In a lengthy and tense closed session Inyo's board of supervisors last week came down hard on the county planning department and its director; in no uncertain terms the supervisors gave the department what many see as a final ultimatum to get moving on the county's general plan.

Last week's stormy session was the culmination of an investigation conducted privately by at least three of the supervisors who had called in members of the planning staff for questioning. At least two courthouse observers said the meeting had left Planning Director Doug Sherburne "pale" and "shaken," although there "was no talk of firing him," according to one administration official.

It was learned that in recent weeks, at

least three of the supervisors, Wilma Muth, Dick Engel and Richard McDonald, had met privately with members of the planning staff. Apparently some of the talks were initiated by the supervisors, some by staff members. All, seemingly, were attempting to find out if the planning department's problems lay in areas of manpower shortages, disorganization, authority or morale.

In their executive session, which lasted well into the evening hours, another supervisor reportedly suggested one planning staff member was incompetent, a suggestion rejected by the other supervisors and by the planning director himself and considered a "personal" attack. Most of the supervisors' criticism centered on Sherburne, but even that appeared to be criticism in which the supervisors pulled their punches.

Sherburne meanwhile maintains his position on "manpower." He claims that he lacks the staff to do the job demanded. In fact there is some evidence to indicate that the planning dep-

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The INYO COUNTY NEWS-LETTER

A NEWS ALTERNATIVE - EASTERN SIERRA NEWS SERVICE

Compiled by John Heston and Benett Kessler

LIMITED CIRCULATION
Published weekly

BUY A LIVING
CHRISTMAS TREE

Week of
Dec. 12, 1977

THE BRIDGE TO NEGIT

SNAKES, COYOTES - AND OTHER PREDATORS - WOULD DESTROY THE MONO LAKE GULL ROOKERY, BUT NOT IF ANGRY NATURALISTS ACT QUICKLY

A bridge over Mono Lake's troubled waters is an issue provoking anger and serious concern among a number of ecologists. At stake is Negit Island's seagull rookery, second largest in the United States. Biologists, naturalists, ornithologists and representative experts of most of the state's scientific community, agree that the gull population will be drastically reduced - or destroyed - by the predators which now have easy walking access to the gull's nesting sites.

The ornithologists in particular are angry as a flock of warhawks at the agency they see as the real predator - Los Angeles' Department of Water and Power - which for years has systematically drained off the water that otherwise has kept Mono Lake's level a constant for a



MONO'S "TUFA TOWERS"
Dotted line indicates
Previous water levels

period of thousands of years. The receding water line has finally turned Negit Island into a kind of peninsula with a dry-land bridge to a shore alive with animals. The nesting gulls, which gather for mating in January and February, are now easy prey for a host of carnivores hungry for both the birds and their eggs.

As a temporary measure, a few concerned (See MONO LAKE GULLS, back of green insert)

GRAND JURY AND ATTORNEY GENERAL ENTER PLANNING COMMISSION ISSUE

The Inyo County Grand Jury has called in attorneys from the attorney general's office to conduct an investigation into ongoing charges and countercharges between the planning commission and the board of supervisors.

Although under law he could give no details of the grand jury information, Jury Foreman Ray Williamson said late last week that he thinks "there has been too much mud-slinging. We're going to scratch the surface of this issue and find out what's going on."

The jury's call for attorney general's representatives confirms earlier rumors that members of the planning commission had themselves contacted the AG's office. It is charged by the planning commission that the Inyo Board of Supervisors had too easily over-ridden planning department recommendations in a mobile home development project near Big Pine, and the supervisors, or some of them, were in conflict of interest. Although the planning commission members declined to name any names, they suggested that if "the public" or "the grand jury" were "sufficiently interested," then they would find "all the facts there." Apparently the jury has followed the planning commissioners' lead. At the time the commissioners were rumored to have called in the attorney general's investigators, none would confirm - or deny - the fact, but one at least pointed out that the district attorney "is the supervisors' attorney" which ruled him out for an investigation.

Williamson said he "doesn't know" about how long the investigation will take. He said he "was willing to talk about this issue" (to the press) "since everybody knows about it anyway." The jury is also looking into other matters that he said he cannot talk about now, and that an interim report on all matters of jury interest will be released to the board "some-time around the end of January."

»»»» NOTES FROM B.K. «««



BENETT KESSLER

CHRISTMAS CARD OF THE YEAR: An attractive card which when opened reveals a small seedling evergreen packed in moist material. The little spruce will grow if you remove it from the card and plant it carefully (in filtered sunlight, with plenty of water.) Our thanks - and a holiday greeting - to Lone Pine Insurance man Pete Larson who is sending the "tree" cards to his friends.

SCORES, MAYBE HUNDREDS, OF MINING CLAIMS are being filed by Sunoco, the minerals division of Sun Oil Company. Sunoco is said to be looking for Uranium in the Owens Dry Lake area, and is keeping three drilling rigs in operation, according to our sources. Apparently Sunoco has struck pay dirt. The county clerk's office verifies that Sunoco people have "filed a lot" of claims. But Sunoco is not talking much about what it has in mind for Inyo County.

IT TAKES NO CRYSTAL BALL to envision the day when the environmentalists will be taking a hard look at the Sunoco operation. And opposing the environmentalists will be those who see the need here for an economic boost, not for more wildlands.

INCREASING INTEREST IN MINING EVERYWHERE. We understand they're back at work on the Betty Jumbo tungsten mine in the Inyo Mountains east of Independence. Metal prices are sky-high and apparently going up again.

DWP IS CONCERNED ABOUT THE ENVIRONMENT, or so says DWP land-and-lease man H.B. Jeter. The department wants to get rid of the Bishop Drive-in Theater, which is being sold along with the Bishop Theater. Jeter said the present owner, Merton Pond, was told long ago that if he sold the property, DWP would like it moved or torn down. Jeter says the new owners are not very interested in the drive-in, "and besides," he adds, "it's not good to have a drive-in along the highway. Motorists going by at 50 or 60 miles an hour try to watch the screen."

ALSO SOLD: LONE PINE'S WESTERN AUTO STORE, to Bill and Connie Edwards of the Glendale area. They bought out Mel and Marge Reece, long-time WA owners and Lone Pine boosters. Edwards says he and the family have visited this area for years - and finally found the opportunity to move here. Like the rest of us, they're hoping for a good tourist season.

THEY'RE LAUGHING IN LA about a recent tour of DWP facilities which revealed a tremendous waste of water through leaking faucets, shower heads, etc. "and not a water conservation kit in sight." It seems some DWP employees somehow managed to let in Larry Gross of L.A.'s "Coalition for Economic Survival," and he listed water wastes that would amount to "more than is wasted in the entire Owens Valley."...And after all that TV ballyhoo about wasting water, and telling us how to flush toilets!

THAT'S NO ALLIGATOR IN HESTON'S NEWS-LETTER cartoons. It's a crocodile. As Heston explains: "After all, isn't DWP a 'Croc'?"

BIG PLANS FOR A DEVELOPMENT AT OLANCHA never got off the ground, and it appears they were never intended to, as some L.A. speculators hoped to make a bundle out of, well, a lot of promotion malarkey but no real development. Copeland Lumber Company of Bishop is suing Castner Enterprises (Arlo Castner, Lester and Howard Morlan). Through a local realtor they initiated the purchase of a lot of acreage in the Olancha area, but, as the realtor complained, "they never came up with any cash." And now Copeland says in its lawsuit that Castner ran up a bill of about \$5000 which wasn't paid. Castner, which has an impressive Beverly Hills address, is called "only a land speculation outfit" by the real estate people hereabouts.

CONTROVERSIAL LAND DEVELOPER DEAN KNIGHT is no "speculator" and he wants the planning commission to name names in its implications that some county officials have a conflict of interest in dealing with him. However, he isn't making much headway in his demand; most of the supervisors want to forget about the whole matter. At last week's board meeting they acknowledged a letter from Knight asking for the commissioners to meet before the board. Then board members turned quickly to other business and THAT was the end of THAT.

SOME HOLLYWOOD MOGULS wining and dining at the Sierra Trails in Lone Pine. If their planned show goes through they'll bring a film crew of "35 or 40" here. And that means more wining and dining and that adds up to fun and profit for Inyo. The Dow Villa and Sierra Trails are favorite local hangouts for the film companies.

BISHOP HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS wanting to "know their rights" asked District Attorney "Buck" Gibbons if a police officer has the legal right to order somebody out of a car that is stopped for a traffic violation. A timely question, said Gibbons; the Supreme Court has just ruled that indeed the officer has that right - for his own safety. Gibbons was lawyer-turned-teacher for a day, filling in for Deputy Russell Marwin who conducts a class on law enforcement and the legal system at Bishop High. The program is a presentation of CROP (Community Resource Officers Program).

SO MANY PEOPLE INTERESTED IN THEIR "RIGHTS" these days - but hardly ever a question about what our responsibilities are...

IS ANYBODY LISTENING TO KING THESE DAYS? It's worth a turn of the dial, since its music programming is greatly improved. A few sponsors are coming back, too. Only complaint: Not enough local news, but Harke's trying...And, speaking of news, may the news in your day be good news, every day....

Sincerely,

BK

ECHOES FROM HOUSTON

INYO'S CLOSET FEMINISTS STAYED HOME
BUT THEY WATCHED WITH INTEREST THE
WOMEN'S CONFERENCE ISSUES AND ACTIONS

Houston's shrieking furor has subsided, but reverberations from the recent women's conference there echo around the country - even to Inyo County.

There is no organized feminist movement between the Sierra and the Inyo Mountains, but a quiet polling of county women reveals they were paying more attention to the Houston goings-on than was immediately apparent.

Inyo women are not so vocal as their urban sisters elsewhere, but privately many feel and express, though hesitantly, that Inyo is still "man's country," and perhaps too much so.

Some women contacted by NEWS-LETTER expressed little concern over the passage of the Equal Rights Amendment, and even those who had some interest feel that in any case it is a lost cause - for now. Some feel that it matters very little whether the states ratify the amendment or not; that "women's rights" are merely an extension of "civil" or "citizens'" rights anyway and that under these women will eventually gain most, if not all, of the goals they seek in the marketplace or political arena.

Few of those questioned could name more than three items in the women's conference Revised National Plan of Action. Of the 25-point plan adopted at Houston, no more than ERA, abortion, and the Social Security extension to housewives proposals had remained in the minds of most. To these, some reaction.

The complaints of many centered on jobs. Although more women are stepping into the marketplace, politics and the professions, their positions for the most part rarely take them beyond the "junior executive" level.

One of the county's more prominently visible women - Supervisor Wilma Muth - took note of that condition. She pointed out that Governor Jerry Brown has been criticized for his failure to admit more women into his administration - even though he has appointed more women to his administration than have his predecessors. His appointments of women are usually to commissions and lower echelon jobs. Said Muth: "It's hard for a woman to take over a cabinet position that has been traditionally held by a man; it's hard to expect a woman to lead and feel secure about it."

Muth noted that the state director of Caltrans, Adriana Gianturco, has been the target of continuing criticism. Even in recent days, city officials at Pasadena have loudly demanded Gianturco's dismissal. Their complaint: the as-yet-unfinished Long Beach Freeway. (Gianturco has frequently expressed innovative ideas about transportation; it is thought that even her "good ones" have been attacked by administration males angry because they hadn't thought of it first.)

In Brown's administration there are now two openings on the state water quality control board - and soon there will be a third. Muth herself is awaiting, as a nominee, her appointment to one of the positions, and, with experience gained through her dealings with the Department of Water and Power, is widely

COUNTY TV HITS A SNAG

TRANSLATOR SYSTEM WOULD HAVE USED THE
EXISTING CABLES; "NO WAY," SAYS OWNER

Erroneously assuming they could make use of an existing cable system, the county's television advisory committee moved ahead in its plans for a translator system in the Independence area. Translator enthusiasts had supported the county's venture into private enterprise hoping to receive better - and perhaps cheaper - television service that might even afford them more viewing channels.

The members of the translator committee, and supporters, had planned to use for the proposed translator apparatus a power and signal system established years ago by Cable Television Operator Red Austin. Apparently, members of the committee had been cheerfully disregarding Austin's opposition to the proposed county-financed system; such a system would obviously be competitive to his own. Besides, as Austin argues, there are a lot of questions about the county government's investment in areas of what many feel to be a problem of "free enterprise."

The assumption that they could use Austin's system was unjustified. "There's no way," says Austin, "that I'm going to let them use my power and signal over Independence. I'd actually be cutting my own throat to put the county in the TV business in Independence."

"The taxpayer's going to end up paying for it." Meanwhile, Austin has planned to sell his network of cables and antennae to Ted Hagle who operates a similar system at Bishop. Austin says Hagle "feels the same way I do."

That leaves the translator television committee faced with an overall expenditure estimated to be at about \$50,000. But even at that the translator enthusiasts intend to move ahead, and say that the additional cost will mean no more to the system's users in terms of monthly fees.

Austin also questions the county's proposal to "bill" the translator system users. Some rely on the idea - or law - that says that if television, like radio, "is in the air," it is free to any who want it and can receive it.

The county's attempts to bill customers in other areas have resulted in at least one

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considered as eminently qualified. A week ago, a spokesman at the governor's office declined to comment when questioned by NEWS-LETTER on the appointment.

In the Inyo County administration, women hold positions of command in very few departments (other than Muth's supervisor's position): Rita Bromley, county clerk, and Connie Hildebrand, county auditor. A number of them, however, have been named to "management" positions, but, there again, a manifestation of the "junior executive" syndrome.

At least two others in "the county" may be considered as part of its administrative processes: CETA's Jennifer Brooks Duncan, and the planning commission's Pat Wiltsie. But their areas of "real authority," situated as they are under other governing bodies, would be difficult to define.

Many women feel legislation alone can do
(See FEMINISTS, Back Page)

THE COUNTY, Continued

department workload has increased considerably in the past two years. Long overtime hours are not uncommon for some of its workers. Although the supervisors are aware of the problem it is their contention now that by better organization, more can be accomplished. They have not closed their ears to Sherburne's request for help, but they are taking a wait-and-see position to determine what re-organization may accomplish without that added expenditure.

At mid-week, following the stormy supervisors meeting, Sherburne called his staff together after hours, apparently in the hope of re-establishing "communication" and taking a hard look at the job set before them by the impatient supervisors. Staff members questioned later declined comment on the meeting and said only that a "sensitive situation" exists and that it appeared the department "will work it out."

Sherburne said on Saturday (See interview accompanying) that he has "no complaints" with his staff.

Much of the general plan problem centers on what the county administrator calls a communications break between Sherburne, his employees, the board and the planning commission. (See Smith question-answer interview). But the administrator's statements were interpreted by

a few as indicating there may be some breakdown in planning staff morale, caused either by overburdening or lack of direction.

Whatever the problems, lack of action in the matter of the general plan update has cost the county several critical months. Adequate planning guidelines were seen by the administrator as "the hottest issue in most county governments."

The "general plan" idea was mandated some years back by state and federal agencies. In recent years various county governments - the smaller ones in particular - have come to discover that "planning" is virtually akin to a "constitution" for governing; few are the county departments unaffected by a "general plan."

Without a clearly defined general plan, all considerations of environment, zoning, resources, housing and construction are open to very loose - (and very often politically motivated) - interpretation.

Many in Inyo feel, for instance, that the ongoing problems with the Department of Water and Power might well have been avoided if the county had earlier had access to a well-defined set of action guides.

For detailed statements on what occurred in last week's executive sessions, see the interviews that follow.

What happened?

TWO OF THE PRINCIPALS IN LAST WEEK'S CLOSED MEETING DISCUSS IN INTERVIEWS WHAT OCCURRED AND WHAT THEY FEEL ARE THE NECESSARY STEPS TOWARD RE-ESTABLISHING A WORKABLE PROGRAM

(NOTE- For several days prior to last week's supervisors' meeting, it had become apparent that there existed several critical conflicts between the board of supervisors, the planning commission, and the planning department and its staff. After the executive meeting, most supervisors appeared reluctant to discuss details of the meeting or their views on the planning department, or their intentions regarding it. Finally, after rumors distorted the issue, Administrator John K. Smith felt that clarification was necessary and agreed to the following telephone interview. Once the story was out, Planning Director Doug Sherburne discussed his own position in an interview on Saturday. Both conversations with a reporter for NEWS-LETTER follow)

THE MEETING: SMITH'S VIEW

QUESTION: Is there a problem with Doug Sherburne's performance?

ANSWER: His planning effort is adequate...Administration procedure is the problem, or he wouldn't have the staff talking outside the office. Everybody knows that; it's an indication of problems...The planning commission, planning department and the board are against each other on planning issues. There's been a lack of communication, no coordination on applications.

Q: Is Sherburne responsible for that breakdown?

A: It's his responsibility to communicate to the board and planning commission, especial-

ly on sticky and controversial issues to make sure all involved get input. I've had extensive talks with Doug. It's nothing radical, but we need a better understanding.

Q: Has there been talk of firing Doug?

A: There was no talk of firing him at the executive session...but there was a lot of talk on problem areas he has. A communication gap has occurred in the whole planning effort, and in the department. When our department people are talking on the streets and in groups it isn't too good. If he's running the office properly he would have 100% loyalty and support. It's not against him, but against his procedures.

Q: Do you think the problems with Dean Knight stem from this problem with Doug?

A: Yes. Planning problems erode the department's continuity...I've told Doug that planning is the hottest issue in most county governments. He's got to have the continuity; his staff has got to believe in what they're doing. I have had two long sessions with Doug; he'll have to re-evaluate and re-work his procedures. If he can't, I don't know what will happen - but he has the nucleus of a good department...As you know, the board ordered Doug to report back with a program for finishing the general plan and Bishop Community Plan. If the board can be assured he'll produce, they may give him another employee to work with.

Q: Why has all this come up now?

A: Pressure has been generated. It's the culmination since Doug came here. The Number One priority was the general plan and the Bishop Community Plan. We've had a lot of

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TELEPHONE SERVICE

NEW SYSTEM BYPASSES OPERATORS

Sometime at mid-week, Independence telephone customers near Independence will be dialing direct to their call destinations - without an operator coming on the line to ask their number. New automated equipment installed in recent months by Continental Telephone of California, will go into regular use "on the 15th" - this Wednesday. The new equipment will automatically identify the caller for billing. The changeover will mean no elimination or reduction of toll charges. Seen as benefit to the caller, however is the elimination of the operator and the waiting period - often as long as 30 seconds - that occurs before the call is actually put through.

And along with that, will be the switch-over to a microwave system installed at Independence. Telephone Company officials say that the new system will improve sound quality in the system and will eliminate certain over-ride "hums" and static. The system joins Lone Pine and Bishop in the "no-operator" call-ability. Big Pine, however, remains with the older system.

YOUTH PROJECT

DOOR-TO-DOOR, A PROGRAM TO BRIGHTEN HOLIDAYS FOR NEW HORIZONS' LIVE-INS

Hoping they may augment the limited income of Bishop's "New Horizons" youth home, its staff and residents have launched a door-to-door campaign to sell candles. With its increasing number of residents, some without jobs, "New Horizons" hopes to push a line of fancy

candles made by a similar rehabilitation center in Los Angeles. The product is not, as its buyers discover quickly, a run-of-the-mill home-made candle product. The exotic shells and flotsam from the seashores of 35 countries are inlaid into a luminescent petroleum wax expected to hold up far beyond the holiday. Some are set into



STEIN AND CANDLE
"...a positive program."

hand-thrown pottery bases. Says New Horizons Counsellor Lisa Stein: "They are selling well." She directs a group of the center's young people who are proving to be enthusiastic salesmen, a reflection of the esprit generated by the rehab center's positive program. "NH" tends to turn the youths away from dope and alcohol and toward productive self-support; for a few, the candle sale is a start.

The Inyo Probation Department often turns to New Horizon's center as a "crisis resolution" home. Its residents are often reluctant to depart even when their "probation" is over. But each must "pay his own way."

THE COUNTY, Continued

conversation, but no results.

Q: Was there any talk of getting rid of the whole department?

A: No. The department has to exist under law. We have to have a planning commission or agency to develop and update a master plan.

Q: Was there any talk of any individuals on the rest of the planning staff not doing a good job?

A: Not to my knowledge. There's just been a lack of direction. Maybe Doug hasn't developed the expertise to deal with the department. He sincerely thought it was under control. He had asked for two additional employees at budget time to get the general plan and Bishop plan completed. The board turned him down. They believed he wasn't getting the most out of what he had. And there was no guarantee that he would get more production from more people. Information from the staff level was that there was no right communication - erratic administration.

Q: What's to be done now?

A: We want Sherburne to get a product out fast that we can live with.

SHERBURNE: THE PLANNING DEPARTMENT POSITION

Q: Was there a meeting of your department on Thursday night?

A: The planning department met to discuss the situation, its capabilities and capacity to accomplish demands...and don't confuse the two. We occasionally do have meetings; the situation now is obviously more intense.

Q: Any plan to take some action toward updating the general plan?

A: I'm planning to take action...if we can get the people we need...

Q: What makes the update of the general plan so important right now?

A: It's a culmination of things. It's not a simple matter. The focus began well over a year ago, when the League of Women Voters gave attention to the water issue, and update of the general plan in respect to that. That's the most complex issue. I maintain that the GP is a water plan, that the land uses specified in it do describe water use. We need to do a total overhaul of the conservation element.

Q: Do you have any complaints about your present staff? Are they capable of accomplishing your goals?

A: I have no complaints about my staff.

Q: Do you plan any re-organization, promotions and so forth?

A: There could be some reorganization.

Q: What are the problems in your department?

A: We have no more problems than typically occurring misunderstandings.

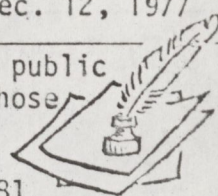
Q: To resolve problems will you promote some of your staff?

A: For the most part, there are no problems. I would rather not go into that. Staff reorganization depends on the board, whether they approve additional employees or not.

Call 878-2582 for NEWS-LETTER subscriptions.

The NEWS-LETTER welcomes letters and comment relevant to public issues, and the editors will publish on the FORUM page those

they consider timely. Letters should not exceed 200 words. Viewpoints concisely stated are those most likely to be published. Address your statement to INYO COUNTY NEWS-LETTER, Box 531, Independence 93526, or call (714) 878-2582 or 878-2381.



BACK TO BASICS: BISHOP FACULTY WANTS MORE ACTION IN THE CLASSROOM AND LESS EMPHASIS ON "EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITY"

To the editors:

The impact of so-called "extra-curricular activities" is cutting into the scholastic work in the Bishop schools. Along with the faculty, I feel that, essentially, the pendulum has swung too far toward social activities and far away from academic emphasis. We now propose to establish some kind of balance in the school atmosphere.

The problem is not just athletics, but also field trips and the presence of visitors in the schools. At times there have been five or six students absent from a class of 30. Teachers feel the impact on their programs and on individual students is getting serious. We have decided to take a look at the situation and propose some changes.

One of these would be the scheduling of activities on Fridays and Saturdays, although co-ordinating this plan with other schools and finding transportation might pose a problem.

We also hope to cut down on the impact of "Homecoming." Last year, it amounted to three days - this year two - and next year, perhaps one and a half days.

In our negotiations with the student council we have also suggested that the entire pep squad go to out-of-town games on Fridays only....We just want to make better accomoda-

tions with these activities. Everyone recognizes the importance of sports in school spirit and student involvement.

The advent of girls' athletics has added to the total impact, with more students involved in sports than ever before.

We have met with principals from schools in the Desert Inyo League. They're willing to cooperate as much as possible on the Friday night and Saturday game idea, but we all recognize that it's a tough problem to work out.

But we are continuing to look for the best solutions: Our goal is to establish a balance for the best education, and at this point the pendulum has got to swing back to middle ground.

- Don Taylor
Superintendent,
Bishop Schools

THE GREEN PAGE

AN EDITORS' NOTE TO NEWS-LETTER READERS

This week for the first time, INYO COUNTY NEWS-LETTER carries among its pages an advertising insert - this at the specific request of the advertiser who wished to reach out to NEWS-LETTER'S unique reader market.

So far, it has not been the policy of NEWS-LETTER to carry advertising, as such. Its limited circulation (now only a few hundred), is hardly large enough to attract advertisers. From time to time, however, upon request, a special insert will be provided (aside from NEWS-LETTER'S news columns) for those who may have in mind a certain advertising program. The advertisement included this week on a separate green page, will appear again next week.

NEWS-LETTER wishes to remain essentially independent from advertisers, but this places a high burden of cost on subscribers.

If, however, the advertisers take interest in NEWS-LETTER'S growing circulation, a limited number of such "inserts" will be published, these completely aside from editorial content or policy. If such should occur on a regular basis, NEWS-LETTER subscribers will be afforded generous reductions (up to 25%) in the amount they pay for subscriptions. At this time, however, it is unlikely that the editors of the NEWS-LETTER will actively pursue advertising accounts.

COUNTY TELEVISION, Continued

lawsuit against the county government - this after a Bishop couple was hauled into court by the county seeking to collect an unpaid bill. Austin avers that "If they put in a translator system at Independence, there's just going to be more lawsuits."

In answer to the claims that the county should not be in the TV business, a few officials say that "private enterprise" has failed to provide adequate quality service throughout the county - and that "a majority of people" would rather have the local government do the job than lack the quality viewing it offers.

One member of the translator committee, Howard Knox of Bishop, was asked why the committee had assumed the use of Austin's system. He replied that "Ted Hagle is in the process of buying out Red Austin and I believe he stated to the commission that he would furnish power and a signal at least temporarily, if he could buy the system from Austin."

Knox says the translator commission "is not trying to put Austin out of business."

That may be, but estimates for service (about \$5 per month, per hookup) undercuts Austin's fee by several dollars in some cases. Some have criticized Austin's cables and receiving system as lacking quality; there was no explanation, however, as to how the county might "improve" service by using the same equipment, even if allowed to.

Elaine Noxon, chairman of the committee, said, "There are many ramifications of the whole thing," and referred enquirants to the county administrator.

Faced with those "ramifications," some are thinking Red's service is not too bad.

March of Dimes

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AND THE NEWBORN



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Between 6 & 8 p.m. Pacific Time. Las Vegas, Nevada.

MONO LAKE GULLS, Continued

groups and individuals (Among them: the Sierra Club, Audobon Society, Friends of the Earth, etc.) hope to dredge out a channel between the former island and the rapidly receding shoreline. In pre-DWP years, almost a mile of water had separated the island. A few determined scientists say they don't know where to obtain funding for their project, but they'll "manage somehow." They agree that if the dredging project is not soon completed, the January nesting season could go hard on the gulls.

Mono Lake's doom was sealed with congressional passage of "Public Law 864" back in 1931. The law withdrew the public lands in Mono Basin "from settlement, location, filing, entry or disposal...for the protection of the watershed supplying the city of Los Angeles." It was a law applauded by L.A.'s burgeoning industrial and big business complexes which are still the big money power behind DWP's mostly-autonomous authority. Without continuous and increasing water flow, there could be no continuous and increasing economic growth.

DWP wasted no time in diverting all the waters that previously fed the prehistoric lake which, like Owens Lake, had harbored a number of large steamships in very recent history. The lake shimmered, bright, broad, deep.

In 1971, the Bureau of Land Management gave a small crust of recognition to the state naturalists' groups: Negit was declared "a wildlife sanctuary." But once the assignment was made the BLM (politically sensitive to DWP's state and national clout) sat back and determined to look the other way. Complaints arose. Of no help at all to the troubled naturalists was BLM's sole answer to the problem: a suggestion that "someone" buy water from DWP "and put it back into the lake."

Equally disturbing to the naturalists is the continued apathy of the Mono County gov-

ernment, which for years has taken an easy attitude toward the depredations of DWP. One spokesman for the scientific community resolutely said the Mono administration is more concerned with "turning Mammoth Lakes into an ecological disaster." Few would deny that there is more cash-flow from tourists and developers than from seagulls.

In spite of everything against them, however, the ecological groups are optimistic, and will soon go to court with the issue. Early efforts to deal with DWP were met with "no response." David Winkler, who has written a scholarly report on the Negit Island and Mono Lake



MONO LAKE GULL
His island rookery
is at stake.

situation, has exerted a strong influence in generating public concern. At a recent inter-agency meeting, he talked to DWP representatives (including DWP Owens Valley official James Wickser). "There was no response when I talked. They just smiled and nodded. They know what I said is true, but they also think there's nothing we can do about it!"

In that view, the DWP may be mistaken. It has long been the department's position that the city's water projects were established before recent environmental controls were legislated and therefore remain unaffected by them. In the nation, other agencies have maintained similar views - until the courts ruled otherwise. In a world of militant and (so far) enormously effective ecologists, agencies resting serene and smug ignore such issues at their peril. Winkler says flatly that the Mono Lake issue "is now a matter for the courts to decide."

One concerned Inyo resident, Biologist Emid Larson, said with assurance: "For the first time in 75 years, DWP is off-balance and there's now hope to save the Inyo-Mono area from destruction." In view of the amazing - and to some, frightening - successes in other similar cases carried into court by the ecological groups, such optimism may be justified. But Los Angeles officials have shown little reaction to the threat of another lawsuit. They have candidly announced their intentions to turn Mono Lake's islands into "isthmuses," and leave the lake bottom around them literally high and dry. To their thinking, apparently, any other course is for the birds.

work beyond the retirement age of 65 - but only with occasional "reviews" of their work performance. The supervisors passed an amendment bringing the over-65 job matter in line with state and federal mandates.

With more than a hundred applicants on hand, the supervisors this week are taking another look at their proposal to hire a public information officer. The matter has dragged on for months with the sups demonstrating an unexplained reluctance to take action in the PIO matter. The PIO, if hired, would play a major role in the county-DWP issue, publicity-wise.

Southern Inyo Artisan's Guild at Lone Pine has "earned more than \$1000" toward renovation of old Lone Pine Hotel.

News Briefs

PETALONYX GILMANII, PIO, THE GOOD BOOK, DARWIN RURALIZATION, AND WORK PAST 65

The grey-green fuzzy desert plant called *Petalonyx Gilmanii* which in recent months has stood ecologically in the way of Darwin's development, has been ruled out as an endangered plant species - and now Darwin, if it can find direction motivation, can move ahead. The supervisors say that little *Petalonyx*, "The Death Valley Sandpaper Plant," does not grow within the Darwin Townsite and therefore is not an issue in community planning. With or without the *Petalonyx*, observers felt that Darwin is not immediately threatened with "urban sprawl," and now has also been ruled "rural" and no longer governed by urban planning rules. Darwinites only wanted to fix some plumbing leaks and add a room here and there anyway.

They call it the "Good Book," a 96-page document spelling out a cost-of-living increase and "benefits" for the county school employees. County school administrators and their employees finally got together under the guidance of a state mediator and have ended their long and sometimes bitter squabbles. The "Good Book" also sets an increase of up to 6.5% next year.

Now it's official: County employees can

The MEDIA

A SHEPHERD'S PASS PLANE CRASH AND ITS WOMAN SURVIVOR WILL BE AN NBC FEATURE

Lauren Elder was back in town last week, feeling fine and happily making plans with a production company to film the story of her previous experience in Inyo County - the plane crash that claimed the lives of her pilot and a friend, but which brought her national prominence when she walked away from it alive.

Elder, who is an artist living in Oakland, was accompanied here by an NBC Executive Producer Gerald Leider, by a second producer, and an Emmy-award-winning writer.

In an interview, Leider said they came to Inyo and the Shepherd's Pass area west of Independence - so they could "get a feel for Lauren's experience



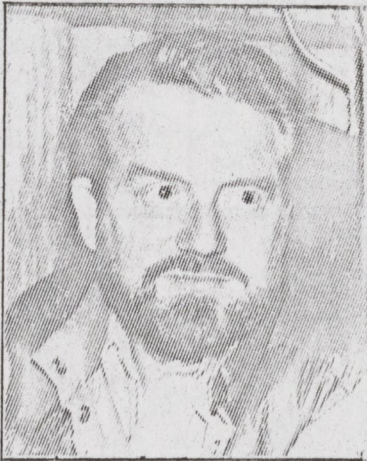
LEIDER
Executive producer...

...to check out the potential shooting locations and decide how the film should be written." NBC will air the film.

After the plane crash, Elder had been taken to Southern Inyo Hospital. From high in the Sierra she had managed - somehow - to walk away from the crash. Arriving at Independence late at night, she knocked on doors until a motel owner got help for her.

In April, Dutton and Company will publish her book about the experience. It is on the book, "And One Alone Survived," that Leider will base his film.

The screenwriter chosen for the job, Lane Slate, says now that he is not sure "how he will put it all together." But few doubt that he can and will, if his record as a screen expert is any key to his ability: Slate wrote, among many others, "Tiger Tail Joe," the TV film epic based on the political career of the late Senator Joe McCarthy and the "Red scare." Prod-



NODELLA
...the producer...

ucer Burt Nodella, also with the group in Inyo, was the producer of the "Get Smart" television series. As members of the group explained, "Everything's still in the beginning stages."

So far it is not yet clear whether Ms. Elder will replay the drama she experienced, as an actress. Although she is an accomplished illustrator and fine artist, she has no film or theater background.

The Hollywood executives, who are also associated with Warner Brothers, stayed in the area for two days. Headquartering at Lone Pine, they hiked into the high country, and into the Shepherd Pass area where Elder's story began in April, more than a year ago.

Except for her book, "nothing much" has happened in the young artists' life. She had remained with the others at the crash site for many hours, but when they died she determined that the only way she herself might survive was to walk out, in spite of her injuries.

Her experience, actual and psychological, apparently afforded her insights into herself and her life, and on these Slate will focus his script. When she rested safely in the hospital at Lone Pine, Elder told some newsmen that she "felt very powerful" and that she made herself "do something she thought she could never do."

On completion of a script and other preparations, filming should begin "sometime next May."



ELDER
...their subject.

THE LOCAL MEDIA: ROY MAYHUGH SELLS KIOQ-FM TO EASTERN DOCTORS

Last week, Bishop's Roy Mayhugh disclosed "officially" what for some time has been no real secret: He has sold his popular and growing FM station, KIOQ (100 FM).

The new owners are two Rhode Island doctors, Eric Johnson and Brent Lambert, who have teamed up with a third partner, Gary Crowder. The latter has "been in radio" for 25 years and on him will rest executive responsibility.

Mayhugh said the deal has been closed for some time. It is in the final stages of escrow. Why, then, no announcement? Explanation lies in the fact that a transfer of radio licenses is no overnight matter. The FCC oversees with a heavy authority its licensees and is "notoriously slow" in okaying transfers. Then, too, the Forest Service must transfer its permit, since KIOQ's broadcast tower is on USFS lands.

KIOQ's growing audience can expect few if any changes in the news-music station's broad-

(See The MEDIA, Page 8)

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THE MEDIA, Continued

cast format. As for personnel, Mayhugh says that News Director Bob Wellman will be given a management role in addition to his news duties. News and entertainment policies will remain "essentially the same," since, as one of the principals said, "Why change a good system?"

And "good system" it appears to be. The new owners are moving into a proven, though still controversial, formula long ago established by Mayhugh and his Los Angeles partner, Jay Stevens: a mixture of friendly, though not overpowering, banter between music selections that appeal to the "larger audience," and a more-or-less complete county-wide news coverage. It is news with little or no interference from management and which pulls no punches to favor either advertisers or "sacred cow" institutions. Wellman's sports coverage has been considered another success factor.

Mayhugh and Stevens started KIOQ from a tiny space in Mayhugh's garage; For the few who at that time listened to FM radio it was heard only barely outside Bishop. Now, from its new downtown studios, FM-100 reaches out to the southern parts of the county, well into Mono County, and far into Nevada.

Mayhugh may try his talents elsewhere, although his immediate plans are indefinite. He will, however, "continue the partnership with Stevens." There was no "official" word on what the new owners paid for KIOQ, but it was believed the price was in the area of \$100,000.

FEMINISTS, Continued

very little to improve their situation - even where they want it improved. Like "equality" in any area (racial, economic, social, etc.) it defies legislative control because it is a matter of public consciousness-level and long-established (and often outworn) public attitudes. One Inyo County worker, a secretary, has planned on entering law school. Lawyer friends have told her, and other women entering Law, that "women make good lawyers, but not good trial lawyers." (It is believed by some that the presence of women on juries is in fact the point against women as trial lawyers: The women jurors, it seems, either envy or resent the woman before the bench, finding her too much of a reminder of their own lack of education or initiative.)

Of the points of action adopted by the women at Houston, it is interesting to note that although the women contacted here were "interested" in the abortion issue, few felt that it was in anyway relevant to there own lives.

Of interest too - and this may lie at the root of the issue - was the reluctance of women to speak their views "for the record." Most chose to maintain their anonymity. One may have voiced the secret feelings of all: "Why all the fuss about it? Why Houston? We usually get what we want sooner or later anyway."

And to that, even the most chauvinistic of males will probably add a resigned "Amen."

eastern sierra news service

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